

Transformation— An International Perspective

Transformation is often considered in terms of a revolution in military affairs—the new doctrine, organization, and technology that may change the nature of warfare. But such a revolution is just one aspect of broader global trends. National militaries in many countries are being restructured to engage the realities of the 21st century. This JFQ Forum looks at seven countries in different regions of the world to illuminate the modes of transformation that are currently underway with all their inherent promises and risks.

The militaries surveyed represent countries of strategic interest to the United States and also reflect many facets of instituting change and the challenges posed by transformation. China, India, and France have experienced militaries that are seeking to enhance their regional capabilities while responding to technological advances, fiscal constraints, and uncertainty on the international scene. Indonesia and South Africa are cases of nations that are reshaping militaries in the face of profound political, social, and economic change. And Poland and Colombia epitomize disparate nations that have undertaken a significant restructuring in the area of civil-military relations.

Collectively, these articles suggest the monumental and expanding scope of transformation as an international phenomenon. For professional officers the implications of this process are important. They reveal both the range of factors influencing military effectiveness as well as diverse perspectives on the shift of power in defense establishments. Moreover, the articles suggest that the United States must be increasingly sophisticated when engaging militarily with a range of countries around the world. Finally, the articles call for a reappraisal of the revolution in military affairs and the strategic consequences of military transformation.

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